



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Whitney Smith, Tourism Cares

Whitney.Smith@tourismcares.org

Becca Barnhart, Willamette Valley Visitors Association

marketing@willamettevalley.org

**Willamette Valley Visitors Association Joins Tourism Cares' Meaningful Travel Program;
Will Serve as the Host of the North America Meaningful Travel Summit in Fall 2024**

*Oregon-based Destination Organization to Partner with Tourism Cares to Support Region's
Culture, Heritage, and Natural Resources*

Norwood, Mass., USA (November 15, 2023) – Tourism Cares, a global non-profit dedicated to advancing sustainability within the tourism industry, is delighted to announce that the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is the latest destination to join Tourism Cares' Meaningful Travel Program, a comprehensive educational initiative that engages the travel trade around sustainable tourism, cultural preservation, and community engagement. As part of this new partnership, WVVA will serve as the host destination of Tourism Cares' 2024 [North America Meaningful Travel Summit](#), scheduled for September 30 - October 2, 2024, in Eugene, Oregon, and will be a featured destination on the newly relaunched Tourism Cares [Meaningful Travel Map](#).

The 2024 North America Meaningful Travel Summit will bring together industry leaders, destination managers, tourism professionals, and community-led organizations to build relationships, grow partnerships and resources, as well as share best practices focused on prioritizing meaningful travel within the tourism industry. As part of the event, attendees will explore the Willamette Valley region and engage with local communities through facilitated networking opportunities, educational sessions, workshops, tours, and volunteer experiences. By building direct connections with the global travel trade, Willamette Valley businesses, non-profits, and social enterprises will benefit from the long-term economic opportunity that tourism can bring to the region.

“At Tourism Cares, we define meaningful travel as conducting business in a way that directly benefits host communities, protects cultural and environmental assets, and engages guests in a deeper, more responsible way,” shared Greg Takehara, CEO of Tourism Cares. “We are thrilled about Willamette Valley Visitors Association’s investment in our Meaningful Travel Program, and their dedication towards sustainability truly embodies the hard work that needs to happen around meaningful travel. We look forward to engaging with them on their sustainability journey and are excited to host the North America Meaningful Travel Summit with them next fall.”

Dawnielle Tehama, Executive Director of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association, highlighted the importance of sustainability in their region, stating, “Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do in the Willamette Valley. We recognize that our natural landscapes, local businesses, and vibrant communities are all interconnected, and we have a responsibility to protect and nurture them. By growing our regenerative tourism practices with the support of Tourism Cares, we hope to better preserve our region’s unique character, support local economies, and create lasting positive impacts for both residents and visitors. We look forward to hosting the Summit next year and serving as a leader for other travel professionals in destination stewardship and meaningful travel.”

As part of their partnership, WVVA will be included on Tourism Cares’ newly relaunched Meaningful Travel Map – an interactive B2B tool that helps the travel trade and sustainably minded visitors easily source authentic, community-led experiences, products, services, accommodations, and tours. Using a comprehensive vetting process conducted by Tourism Cares staff, WVVA’s regional partners will be highlighted on the map, creating a competitive advantage to the growing consumer demand for responsible travel and providing direct economic impact for local communities and social enterprises within Willamette Valley.

“It is exciting to see more destinations making commitments to their local people and communities by engaging in our Meaningful Travel Program,” continued Takehara. “By empowering DMOs, travel advisors, tour operators and other travel professionals, we hope to create long-term impacts for destinations around the globe.”

To learn more about the Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Program, including information on how to attend or host a Tourism Cares Summit or engage with the Meaningful Travel Map, visit www.tourismcares.org.

To learn more about WVVA’s sustainable tourism practices, visit www.willamettevalley.org/regenerative-sustainable-travel.

###

About Tourism Cares:

Tourism Cares, Inc. is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that advances the travel industry's positive impact to help people and places thrive. We believe it's in all our best interest to support the destinations our industry depends on so that communities, travelers, and businesses can prosper. We mobilize the entire industry to use its business as a force for good by uniting, activating, and inspiring all sectors to make a positive impact through travel. Learn more at TourismCares.org and [@TourismCares](https://twitter.com/TourismCares).

About the Willamette Valley Visitors Association

The Willamette Valley, defined as the area between the crest of the Cascade Mountains and the crest of the Coast Range, from Newberg south to Cottage Grove, is the largest river valley in the Pacific Northwest. Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is a private, nonprofit organization that supports travel and tourism in the Willamette Valley, Oregon's Wine Country. Comprising six destination marketing organizations, WVVA works to maintain the Willamette Valley as Oregon's premier travel destination, while also highlighting the culture, heritage and natural resources of the region. For more information, visit <https://willamettevalley.org/>.